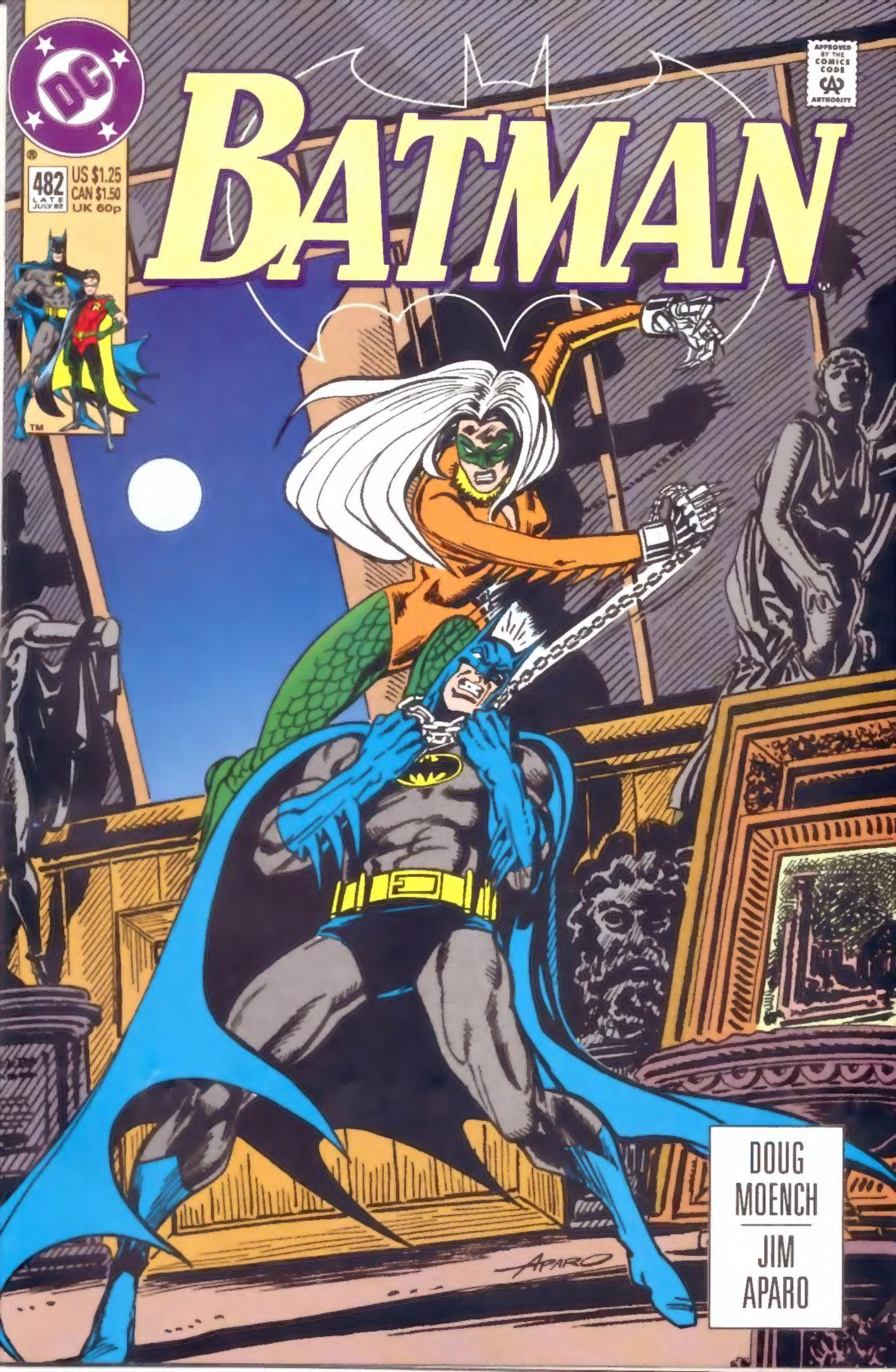
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BATMAN
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TM
DOUG MOENCH
JIM APARO
APARO

GOTHAM MUSEUM, NIGHT:
BECAUSE OF YOU, BAT-DEMON, LORD ZEUS ROTS IN HADES.
BUT HIS VENGEANCE IS MINE, AND MINE IS THE --
VENGEANCE OF THE HARPY

DOUG MOENCH WRITER | JIM APARO ART/LETTERS | ADRIENNE ROY COLORIST | SCOTT PETERSON ASST. EDITOR | DENNY O'NEIL EDITOR | BOB KANE CREATOR

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G-7593

HaCsA -- nom deplume --

SHRREPT

AHN--!?

SWOK

BWUK

UNNGG..!

TOO STRONG FOR ME... NOT READY YET...

SHE AVOIDED THE FULL BRUNT... ONLY STAGGERED HER...

...BUT SHE CAUGHT ME FLUSH...

ALSO STAGGERED...

SHOULD HAVE KNOWN... IF THE BAT-DEMON WAS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO FELL ZEUS...

SHE'S GETTING AWAY...

PAF

SHAWK

SKKRRR

NO--! CAN'T FACE YOU YET-- MUST GET STRONGER!

NEED HELP...

... FROM POSEIDON'S GREAT BEAST!

SPAPT

BWHAWG

CAN'T LEAVE IT SWAYING LIKE THAT.

THE WHOLE THING MIGHT COME DOWN--

PAF

REPT

--BEFORE THAT DAZED *NIGHT GUARD* EVEN KNEW WHAT *HIT* HIM.

BUT THE *HARPY*, NO DOUBT, IS ALREADY--

"--GONE."

MORNING...

FEELS LIKE SUMMER'S COMIN' *EARLY*, MONTOYA...

IF YOU SAY SO, SERGEANT.

GOTHAM MUSEUM

YOU DON'T FEEL IT?

NO.

ASK ME, IT'S HOTTER'N A SATURDAY NIGHT TAMALE IN TIJUANA... IF YA CATCH MY DRIFT.

I'D RATHER NOT.

TUP

TOOH

NOW WHAT'VE WE GOT HERE?

THEFT, MONTOYA-- ONE OF THE STAR PIECES IN A TRAVELING EXHIBIT FROM GREECE.

SPECIAL EXHIBIT GLORY OF GREECE

AND THIS "STAR PIECE"-- NO COMMENTS FROM YOU, SERGEANT BULLOCK-- WAS EXACTLY WHAT?

ANCIENT FUNERARY URN. GUESS THEY BURNED 'EM BACK THEN.

ANY LEADS?

FORENSICS IS STILL DUSTIN' FOR PRINTS, BUT WHO-EVER IT WAS, THEY MUST BE GOOD-- GOOD ENOUGH SO'S THE BATMAN COULDN'T STOP 'EM.

THE BATMAN?

THAT'S HIS LINE UP THERE, BULLOCK-- PREVENTIN' YOU FROM BEIN' CRUSHED BY YOUR COUSIN.

GULP

THE CLOUD ROOM

LUCKY FOR US CRAZY IRIS *DID* SHOW UP LAST NIGHT. IF NOT FOR HER, THE BATMAN WOULDA NAILED US BEFORE WE LAID A *FINGER* ON THIS URN.

YEAH, BUT *THAT* KINDA LUCK DON'T HAPPEN *TWICE*...

NEXT TIME THAT "HARPY" SHOWS UP WILL BE *TROUBLE*.

I SAY WE CUT NEXT TIME *OFF* AT THE *PASS*.

GOOD IDEA, TURK-- YOU *HANDLE* IT.

YOU MEAN... *WHACK* HER?

SHE WANTS TO WHACK *US*, DON'T SHE?

YEAH, BUT... I MEAN, SHE MAY BE *PSYCHO* NOW, CALLIN' HERSELF THE *HARPY* IN THAT *SCREWY GET-UP* AN' ALL, BUT SHE'S STILL, LIKE, *MAXIE ZEUS'S BABE*, AIN'T SHE?

WHAT MAXIE DON'T *KNOW* WHILE HE'S IN THE NUT HATCH...

...WON'T *HURT* HIM IN THE NUT HATCH.

TURK, GET MOVIN' ON IT, AN' TAKE RUBE *WITH* YA-- HOLD HIS *HAND*, IF NEED BE.

JOHNNY, YOU STASH THIS THING IN THE *SAFE* TILL WE FIND A *BUYER*.

RIGHT, GONZ-- ONE *DEEP-FRIED HARPY* COMIN' UP.

I KNOW WHO THE THIEVES ARE, ALFRED -- MAXIE ZEUS'S GANG -- AND WHERE TO FIND THEM.

BUT YOU'RE NOT GOING TO PICK THEM UP?

NOT YET. WITHOUT EVIDENCE, IT'S ONLY MY WORD AGAINST THEIRS...

...AND THEY KNOW I'M NOT LIKELY TO TESTIFY IN COURT.

DEFENSE ATTORNEYS STILL INSISTING ON FULL IDENTIFICATION OF PROSECUTION WITNESSES, ARE THEY?

PITY, THAT.

IN ANY CASE, THE HARPY IS THE GREATER AND MORE IMMEDIATE THREAT -- VIOLENTLY INSANE.

BUT YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE TO FIND HER?

I ONLY KNOW THEY CALLED HER IRIS.

I'M SURE YOU'LL FIND A WAY, SIR, AND MEANWHILE THERE IS SOME BRIGHT NEWS -- OUR NEW NEIGHBORS MOVE IN MONDAY.

THEN TIM'S FATHER IS BUYING THE ESTATE?

THEY SIGN THE DOCUMENTS TODAY.

-- SIGNED HER DEATH WARRANT THE MINUTE SHE JUMPED ON OUR DINNER TABLE, RUBE.

YEAH, BUT... BUT MAYBE IRIS WON'T EVEN COME BACK HERE, TURK...

HEY, WHAT DAME EVER LEFT ALL HER *CLOTHES* BEHIND? TELL ME *THAT*, RUBE.

SHE'LL COME BACK FOR 'EM, BELIEVE ME, AN' WHEN SHE *DOES*...

SHRRUPT

A LONG WAIT, TURK-- *ETERNITY.*

SHRIIIP

...WE'LL BE WAITIN'.

AUGH-K

IRIS--! D-DON'T *DO* IT! DON'T M-MAKE ME--

IRIS NO LONGER *EXISTS*, RUBE!

SWUT

NOW THERE IS ONLY--

--THE *RAGE* OF THE *HARPY!!*

SHRREKK

--MY LAST DAY, YOU KNOW.

YOU PROBABLY NEED THE REST.

YES. NOT THAT MADNESS IS CONTAGIOUS, OF COURSE, BUT AFTER SO MANY YEARS IN ITS PROXIMITY...WELL, LET'S JUST SAY SOME DISTANCE WILL DO ME GOOD.

ARKHAM ASYLUM

THE NEW DIRECTOR ARRIVES TOMORROW. JEREMIAH ARKHAM, SCION OF THE ORIGINAL FAMILY.

CAN'T SAY I'M TOO UPSET ABOUT RETIRING...

ANYWAY, HERE HE IS -- JUST GIVE A CALL WHEN YOU WANT OUT.

HAVE YOU COME TO GLOAT? TO SEE HOW THE MIGHTY ZEUS HAS FALL--

MAXIE, WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT A... HARPY?

A HARPY? DAUGHTER OF THAUMAS AND ELECTRA, OF COURSE -- A TEMPEST-GODDESS, A RAVAGER, SPOILER OF FEAST...

THERE'S A HARPY IN GOTHAM, MAXIE-- AND SHE'S VERY JEALOUS OF IRIS.

IRIS? MY MESSENGER?

THE HARPY WANTS TO... TAKE HER PLACE.

YOU MEAN... KILL HER?

WITH YOU IN HERE, MAXIE, I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN STOP THIS HARPY... BUT I NEED TO KNOW WHERE IRIS IS.

IT'S A TRICK, ISN'T IT? A TRAP! YOU JUST WANT TO--

SUIT YOURSELF. IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE THE HARPY IS REAL--

WAIT! HER NAME IS IRIS PHELIOS. SHE LIVES ON ISLAND AVENUE--NUMBER 489, TOP FLOOR.

AND IF SHE'S NOT THERE, WHERE WOULD SHE GO?

GO? SHE'S GOT NOWHERE ELSE-- NOT SINCE I GOT HER OUT OF THE CIRCUS...

"...NOWHERE EXCEPT BACK TO HER PERCH... IN THE CLOUDS."

"THE CLOUDS, MAXIE?"

"YEAH--OLYMPUS, OF COURSE."

"I SEE. THANKS, MAXIE. MAYBE IRIS CAN BE SAVED."

FEELS LIKE SOMEONE'S WATCHIN' M--

HNH--NEVER EVEN *NOTICED* THAT GARGOYLE ON THE ROOF BEFORE...

SKAIIIII

WHAT THE--?!

BAM BAM BAM

KAWUMP

GORDON? GET A HOMICIDE TEAM DOWN TO 489 ISLAND AVENUE, TOP FLOOR.

TWO DOWN -- BOTH MEMBERS OF MAXIE ZEUS'S GANG.

AND THE MURDERER?

THE ONE I TOLD YOU ABOUT-- FROM THE MUSEUM.

THE "HARPY"?

HER REAL NAME IS IRIS PHELIOS. THIS IS HER APARTMENT.

I'M GOING AFTER HER NOW.

JUST A WOMAN, AM I?

I AM THE TEMPEST... THE RAVAGER... THE FURY OF THE LORD'S VENGEANCE...

ONE MORE MORTAL, AND THEN THE WORST FOR LAST... THE BAT-DEMON ITSELF.

CLEARLY, SHE'S STILL AFTER THE FOUR IN THE MUSEUM, HUNTING THEM DOWN FOR "DEFYING THE WILL OF ZEUS"-- AND SHE'S ALREADY TAKEN *TWO*...

...MAKING HER *NEXT* VICTIMS OBVIOUS.

-- *SLASHED* TO DEATH.

YEAH, ALMOST LIKE AN *ANIMAL* DID IT... SOME *BEAST* OF *PREY*...

POLICE

POLICE

THREE DOWN...

"...AND ONLY *ONE* LEFT."

JOHNNY SPLATTERED OUT IN THE *STREET*... TURK AN' RUBE NOT ANSWERIN' THEIR *PHONES*...

I GOTTA GET *OUT* O' HERE WHILE I *CAN*...

...*SELL* THIS THING FOR A LONG TICKET OUTTA *TOWN*.

LEAVING *EARLY* TONIGHT, SIR?

UH, YEAH...

I GOT SOME URGENT BUSINESS, FRANKIE...

K-K-K-K-

...SO I'M LEAVIN' YOU IN CHARGE O' THE CLUB.

WHAT THE--? IT'S SPOILING OUR DINNER.

ANYBODY ASK'S FOR ME, I'LL BE GONE FOR--

KAUMPH

MORTAL FOOL! YOU CANNOT ESCAPE THE VENGEANCE OF ZEUS!

WHA--?

YAHH!

KRASHH

HWUKK

TMP

KLUMP

SHA

YOU!

SHA-KINGG

HELLP

EEEEEEEE

I'M STRONGER NOW, BAT-DEMON... STRONG ENOUGH FOR THE FINAL VENGEANCE OF LORD ZEUS...

ZEUS SENT ME TO SAVE YOU, IRIS... FROM THE MADNESS OF THE HARPY.

YOU LIE!

IT'S TRUE. GO TO ARKHAM--

HADES.

--AND ASK HIM.

HIS WORST FEAR RIGHT NOW IS THAT HIS BELOVED IRIS WILL BE DESTROYED BY THE HARPY.

THERE IS NO MORE IRIS! IRIS IS DEAD!

ZEUS WILL NOT BE PLEASED TO HEAR--

SILENCE!

POK

POK

POK

POK

CHUP

BAUK-K

KRATCH

WHF WHF WHF

SWFFFF

STOKT

NO!

NOT AGAIN--!

BLAM!

ABOVE...

HIGHER GROUND...

KITCHEN

THE HARPY'S LAIR... ABOVE THE CLOUDS...

... AND SHE'S GONE EVEN HIGHER...

NO, IRIS!

DON'T DO IT--!

KRAT

...LOUD ROOM

PAF

SHANKT

TWUNGG

ONE CHANCE...

...AND THE TIMING'S GOT TO BE *PERFECT.*

WHA--?!

DON'T FIGHT ME--

--OR WE'RE BOTH GONE!

I WILL *NOT* BE SAVED BY THE *BAT-DEMON* FROM--

CHAT

UHNNNN--

EASY, IRIS-- ZEUS IS *WAITING* FOR YOU...

...ALTHOUGH *HARDLY* IN *OLYMPUS.*

QUITE A NIGHT... BUT WHY DID MAXIE ZEUS *WANT* THIS ITEM IN THE FIRST PLACE? SIMPLY TO *SELL?*

ACCORDING TO ONE OF HIS GANG, IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE FOR *ME.*

A *GIFT?*

ONLY *POSTHUMOUSLY.* IT'S A *FUNERARY URN,* GORDON...

...INTENDED FOR MY *ASHES.*

END

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'Lo. We'll be looking at some more letters on BATMAN #475 for two very good reasons: a) we received quite a bit of mail on it and b) due to the biweekly schedule, it's too early for letters on #476 (it just hit the stands yesterday).

And first up...

Denny,

Please keep Vicki Vale around for a while. Even if she only makes Bruce jealous, at least he stays in touch with his humanity that way.

See ya next month,
Tim Healy
West Hurley, NY

Whoops.

* * * * *

Dear Batmaniacs,

"The Return of Scarface" in the March issue of BATMAN is most welcome. Alan Grant has created two inspired Bat-villains during his tenure as writer, and Scarface is one of them. (The other is the Rat-catcher, in case you're wondering). Very few writers can make such a claim, even if their stories were good. But Alan has not "merely" brought back the manic Ventrilo-quist and the puppet with an attitude, he has scripted a tale that adds further to the fascinating mystery of this demented duo. Bravo!

Undoubtedly, the villain is the star of this issue. The drama unfolded grippingly as we saw the Demonz seemingly put the gang boss out of action permanently, only for the bizarre creature to rise again, as we knew he would. (I almost found myself uttering a little cheer as the voice came out of the makeshift coffin the pathetic Rhino had built...and *that* is chilling!) We have here a maddening mystery...either the Ventriloquist is the most insane human being Batman has ever encountered (that includes, in my estimation, the Joker and Two-Face) or the Scarface dummy is yet another manifestation of the occult, which is becoming an increasingly frequent phenomenon in Batman comics. Personally, I favor the former explanation, but I sincerely hope we are left to ponder this question for a good long while yet. No origin story, please!

I said that Scarface is the star of this issue, but Alan didn't allow Batman to be obscured totally. Such is Alan's mastery of comic book storytelling that the Dark Knight more than made an impact (small i) of his own, even if on the periphery and through the device of Vicki Vale. "So a man kissed a woman. So what?" we read in Batman's thoughts on page 19. So I suspect we shall soon see the BatMAN surfacing in these pages again, and I look forward to that. Ahh, romance is in the air! I wonder, though, if it will aVALE the Batman aught. We shall see. And thanks to the still-improving Norm Breyfogle, we shall see in fluid, dynamic images improved further by the switch to the new format. Adrienne's colors are certainly enhanced, and that's saying something!

Best,
Dale Coe
Warrington, Cheshire
ENGLAND

Certainly is. Thanks as always, Dale.

* * * * *

Dear Denny and cohorts,

As this is my first letter to the comic book world, I hope that you can find room to print it among the letters by Malcolm Bourne, Uncle Elvis, Dale Coe, and all the other regulars. I've been a loyal reader for only a month; however, in that time, I read every regular Batman title and every other Batman publication dating back to mid-1986. Six years of Batman in one month! And, boy howdy, am I impressed. Forget about any titles over in the "other" company—the three Batman titles that you kids produce are as good as comics get. Alan Grant and Norm Breyfogle make the best team in comics. Sure, the stories are wonderful and the art is fantastic. But when you put the two together, you achieve a whole that is even greater than the sum of the parts. And as if they weren't enough, we have Peter "the Great" Milligan and the classy, classic Batman art of Jim Aparo in 'TEC, and a veritable plethora of great talent in LOTDK. Yes, times are good in Gotham.

Issue #475 was brilliant. Scarface has to be one of the best character creations in decades. Given the opportunity by you guys at DC, I believe that he can become one of the great Batman villains and not just another weird character. And by the way, I hope the turn of events involving Vicki leads to a positive change in her character. I've never thought she was quite right for Bruce.

Before I sign off, I'd like to request a few characters for future issues. (1) Norm's Catman. One word: pleaseohpleaseohpleaseohpleeeease! (2) Jim's KGBeast. He's not dead, so what's he up to? And I wouldn't complain if you put it out as a deluxe format miniseries. I think both Jim and the Beast deserve the special treatment. (3) And lastly, my longshot choice—Ma Gunn. Well, how about a cameo at least?

Keep on truckin',
Michael R. Lane
Berkeley, CA

P.S. I read somewhere that there's a better chance of getting your letter printed if it's neatly done. Well, how's this laser-printed masterpiece?

Masterful. Why do you think I ran your letter? Certainly wasn't the content...

Just kidding, Michael, although you're absolutely right about neatness counting. We can't stress that enough. We greatly prefer typed letters. I realize that not everyone can afford a laser printer, but please write neatly if you must handwrite. Short letters also have a better chance, so keep it short, sweet and neat.

No immediate plans for appearances by any of the above, but one never knows. By the way, welcome to the wonderful world of the Bat. Stick around, we've got tons of good stuff coming.

* * * * *

Dear Denny and Kelley,

When will Robin be back in BATMAN? When will he ever be in 'TEC? In the process, when will we see Jim Aparo's version of his costume besides a hologram in ROBIN II #2?

Anyhow, BATMAN #475 was one I enjoyed. I'm not familiar with Scarface, so it was especially good. After reading it, I'm glad Batman is going to reveal his secret to Vicki. I don't know what kind of couple Bruce and Vicki would make if they were a real couple. Maybe next issue will clear things up more. After that maybe they'll have more of a relationship. It may be good not just for Bruce but for Batman, too. Tim needs a love interest, also.

See you then,
J.P. Richardson
Midland, TX

* * * * *

Dear Denny and Scott,

Re: Robin Rules

Here they are! The long-awaited Robin Rules:

1) Robin shall get just as much publicity as what's-his-name with the pointy ears (hmm...seems to me this one has been broken recently... remember, they are *equal* partners).

2) Robin must be drawn to show his bulging muscles, not like a wimp, as in WHO'S WHO #10.

3) Robin is the greatest comic book character to exist...treat him this way.

4) Thou shalt not steal (or else Robin shall kick thy butt!).

5) All Robin's friends are cool (let's just hope he gets some new ones).

6) If Robin doesn't get a girlfriend soon, let's see who Starfire likes better, Tim or Dick!

7) The Doublemint Twins are reserved strictly for Robin.

8) Robin gets his own set of weapons (no Bat-Tools).

9) The title of COMIC X is to be ROBIN (in big print) with Batman, the World's Greatest Detective (in very small print underneath it).

10) Robin is a teenager, therefore he can leave his room messy (however, the Batcave must remain clean and tidy).

If any of these laws are broken, Tim's gonna hunt you down (think, if he found the Joker's hideout, he must be able to find 1325 Avenue of the Americas).

Till next time, this is Brian Carpenter reminding you to be cool and stay Robinly.

Brian Carpenter
President, Robin Fan Club
22 Woodfield Drive
Webster, NY 14580

P.S. Please print this letter, or I'm tellin' Tim.
P.P.S. ROBIN RULES!!!

Well, there it is, ladies and gentlemen—the Robin Rules. Any additions, subtractions, comments or homemade soup will be more than welcome, uh...Robinly.

* * * * *

Dear Jim Aparo,

Thank you Thank you Thank you